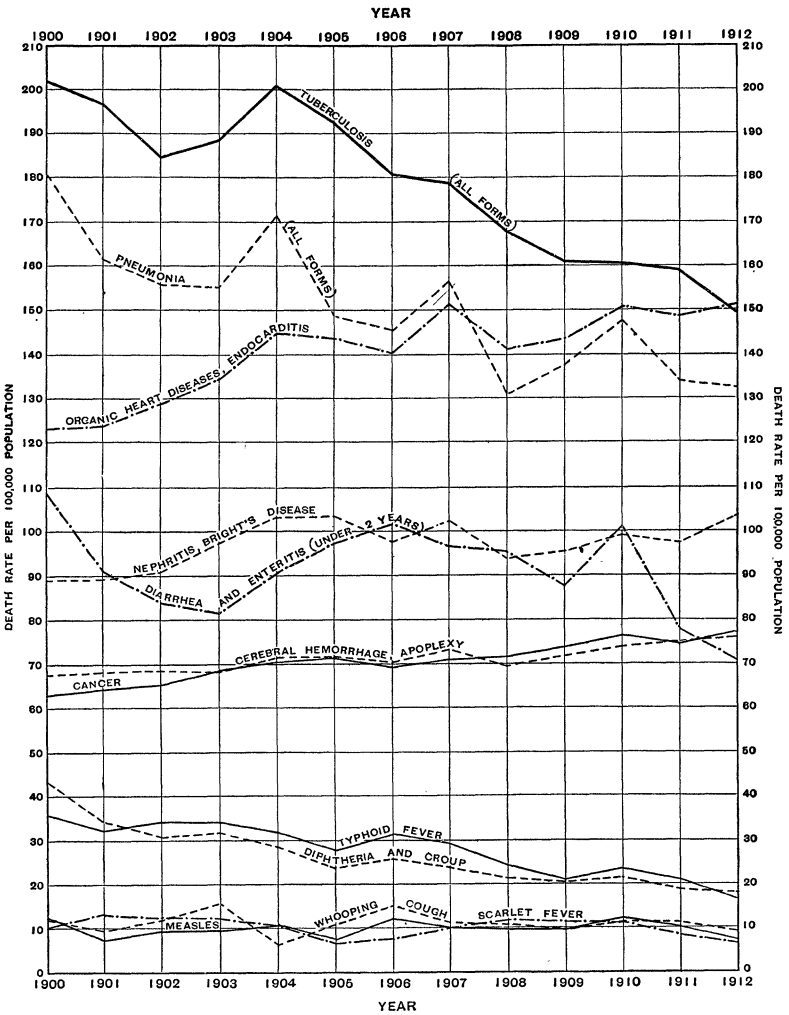
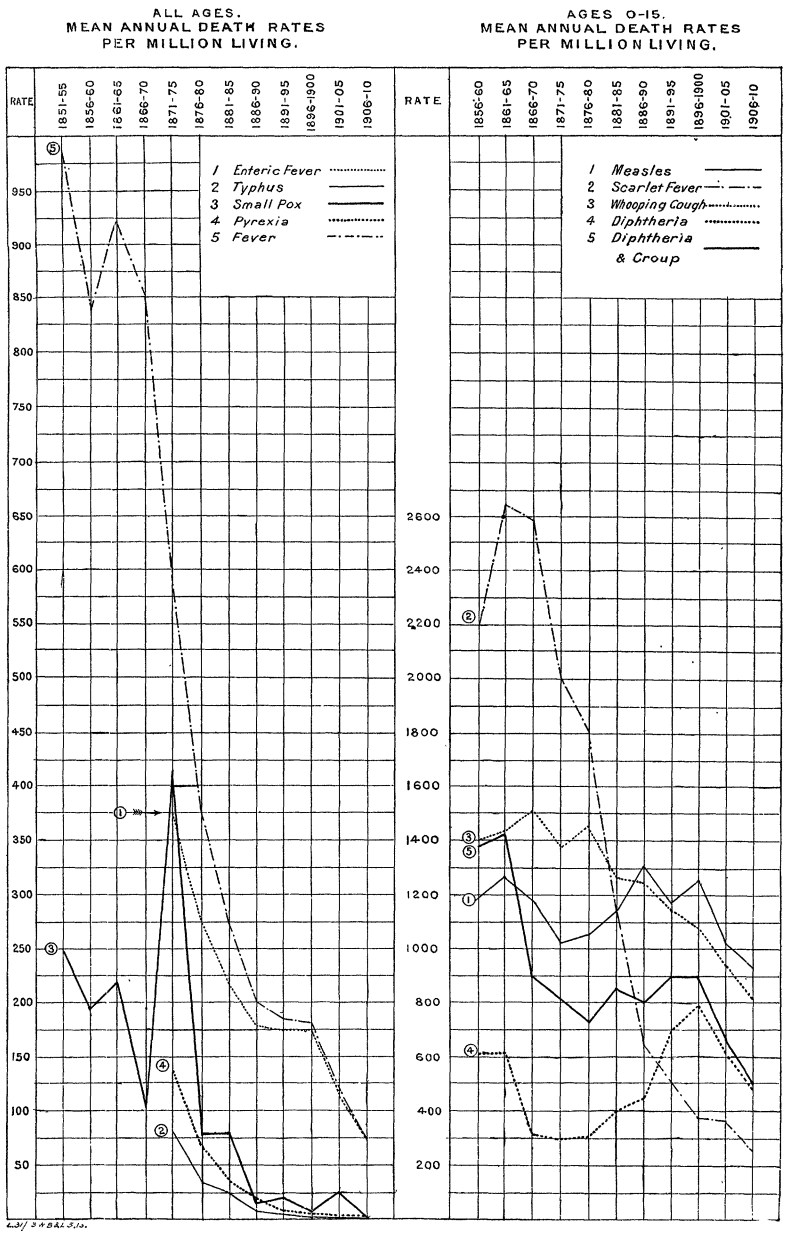


DEATH RATES FROM IMPORTANT CAUSES OF DEATH IN THE REGISTRATION AREA OF THE UNITED STATES: 1900–1912.

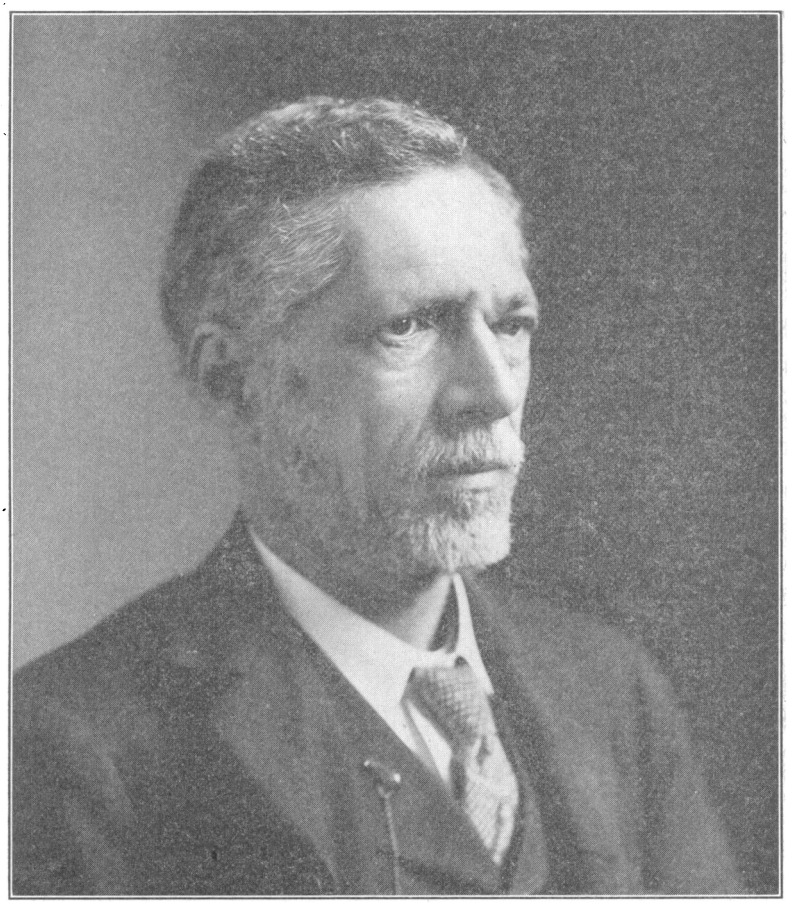
of pleasure and the like. But another explanation may be urged. If we preserve the lives of hundreds of thousands of infants who can not be properly nursed by their mothers and of hundreds of thousands of young people of inferior constitution who would previously have succumbed to tuberculosis, we have in the population between forty and sixty a large proportion of people less vigorous than those who would have survived harsher conditions. It is not surprising if they have a higher mortality.

WILLIAM RAMSAY AND RAPHAEL MELDOLA

THE richness of England in men of scientific distinction is shown by the fact that almost every month it is necessary to record the deaths of those who have contributed in important measure to the advancement of science. It may be feared that the even more



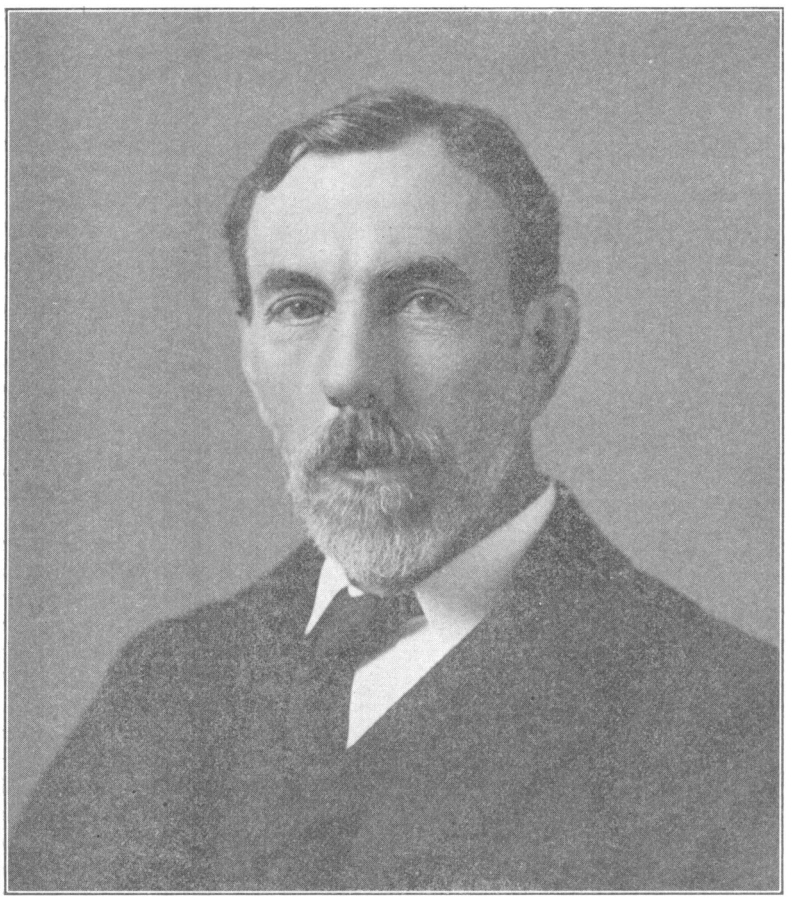
MORTALITY FROM EPIDEMIC DISEASES IN ENGLAND AND WALES BY FIVE YEAR PERIODS TO 1910.



RAPHAEL MELDOLA.

numerous names of young men of promise in the scientific career who die on the battlefield and in the hospital will leave fewer men of eminence in the next generation. The equal sacrifices, we venture to say equally wanton sacrifices, in Germany, in France, in Russia and in Italy, place great responsibility on us in America to provide in the coming years the research work which is essential to the welfare and the progress of the world. We should be warned not only to save our young men of ability from futile death, but also to give them the opportunity to do the work for which they are fit.

In the death of Sir William Ramsay and the earlier death of Professor Raphael Meldola, England has lost two chemists of world-wide reputation and of striking personality. There are not many contemporary men of science so well known as Ramsay. His earlier researches on organic chemistry, on the molecular weights of liquids and on vapor density and pressure are known to chemists, but it was the discovery, in conjunction with Lord Rayleigh, of argon, announced at the Oxford meeting of the British Association in 1894, which first attracted universal attention. However honors should be divided in the case of argon, Ramsay proceeded himself to the discovery in the uranium



WILLIAM RAMSAY.

minerals of helium, previously known only in the spectrum of the sun's chromosphere. The use of liquid air led to the discovery of three other elements of the same type, neon, krypton and zenon. Ramsay not only discovered the group of inert gases, but also described their monatomic character and their position among the elements.

Two years after the announcement of the discovery of argon, and at nearly the same time as the discovery of helium by Ramsay, Röntgen discovered the X-rays and Becquerel the rays of uranium, followed by the discovery of radium by the Curies. In the three great nations at the same time advances were independently made which gave a new direction to modern physics. To Ramsay belongs the remarkable triumph of having united the work on the inert gases and on radium by demonstrating the genesis of helium from radium. His further transformation of the elements has not been confirmed. Ostwald, who wrote in 1912 a biographical sketch of Ramsay for *Nature,* finds him an apt example of the "romantic type," which he has contrasted with the classical type. The investigator of the romantic type makes errors as well as striking discoveries and proselytes.

Ramsay's grandfather was president of what is said to have been the first

chemical society, his uncle was director to the British Geological Survey. Meldola was descended from a distinguished line of Spanish rabbis. If his grandfather had not moved to England, Meldola would have been more likely to have been a Jewish theologian than a chemist. Both Ramsay and Meldola are members of the "notable families" recorded by Galton as contributing fellows to the Royal Society. We have thus inherited ability in both cases, in the former displayed in a constant direction, in the latter diverted by the environment to a different track. In this connection it is worth noting that Meldola's performance was unusually versatile, as is indicated by the fact that he was president, on the one hand, of the British Chemical Society and the Society of Chemical Industry and, on the other hand, of the British Entomological Society and the Essex Field Club. His first papers were on mimicry and protective coloration in insects and he translated Weismann's "Theory of Descent" into English. He was for thirty years professor of chemistry in the Finsbury Technical College and conducted important researches there on the chemistry of coloring matters.

The writer of this note did not have the privilege of personal acquaintance with Meldola, but he is said to have been, like Ramsay, a man of sympathetic personality, exerting great influence on his students, active in all measures for the improvement of education and for the promotion of science.

SCIENTIFIC ITEMS

WE record with regret the death of Josiah Royce, the distinguished student of philosophy, professor at Harvard University; of Seth Low, formerly president of Columbia University; of Thomas Gregor Brodie, professor of physiology in the University of Toronto; of Sir William Henry Power, F.R.S., known for his contributions to sanitation and public health; and of Johannes Ranke, professor of anthropology at Munich.

SIR T. CLIFFORD ALLBUTT has been elected president of the British Medical Association. A message of congratulation was at the time sent to him on the attainment of his eightieth birthday which occurred on July 20.—Professor C. F. Marvin, chief of the Weather Bureau, and Dr. L. O. Howard, chief of the Bureau of Entomology, have been appointed by the secretary of agriculture to represent the U. S. Department of Agriculture on the Council of Research which is being organized by the National Academy of Sciences.

ON the initiative of the Royal Society a Board of Scientific Societies has been established in Great Britain to promote the cooperation of those interested in pure or applied science; to supply a means by which the scientific opinion of the country may, on matters relating to science, industry and education, find effective expression; to take such action as may be necessary to promote the application of science to industries and to the service of the nation; and to discuss scientific questions in which international cooperation seems advisable. The board at present consists of representatives of twenty-seven scientific and technical societies. An executive committee has been appointed, consisting of Sir Joseph Thomson, president of the Royal Society, chairman; Dr. Dugald Clerk, F.R.S., Sir Robert Hadfield, F.R.S., Mr. A. D. Hall, F.R.S., Professor Herbert Jackson, honorary secretary, Sir Alfred Keogh, K.C.B., Sir Ray Lankester, K.C.B., F.R.S., Professor A. Schuster, secretary of the Royal Society, Sir John Snell, Professor E. H. Starling, F.R.S., Lord Sydenham, F.R.S. and Mr. R. Threlfall, F.R.S.